

## **Task Force on Professional Levels and Competencies [PLC Task Force]**

**June 23 & 24, 2009**

**Living History Farms**

**West Des Moines, IA**

### **Decisions**

- Approved the factors that define a competency as “core”
- Approved criteria for self-assessing the group’s draft core competencies for teaching staff

### **Meeting Notes**

**Day 1: June 23, 2009**

**Opening Remarks – Penny Milburn, Consultant, Iowa Department of Education**

Penny welcomed everyone and reviewed the work ahead. She announced the addition of a sixth meeting, tentatively set for October 14, to provide the PLC Task Force time to gather external input and reflect upon its final draft prior to approval.

Open Forums, as suggested by the ECI Professional Development Steering Committee, will be scheduled in multiple locations during September, allowing for public input across the state. The input sessions will be hosted by PLC Task Force members in conjunction with statewide meetings already on the calendar and in selected regions across the state.

**Decision Making Process for Approval of Recommended Core Competencies for Iowa’s Early Learning and Early Intervention Teaching Staff - Barb Merrill, Co-Chair, ECI Steering Committee for Professional Development & Penny Milburn, Consultant, Iowa Department of Education**

Barb reminded members that the Charge to the Task Force was issued by both the ECI Professional Development Steering Committee and the Department of Education (DE). The Steering Committee’s work is focused on the overarching task of creating a comprehensive statewide system of Early Care, Health, and Education that encompasses the four subsystems that comprise an early childhood system. Because of its expertise and close relationship with other state departments, the DE has been assigned oversight of the Task Force’s work and recommendations. The ECI Professional Development Steering Committee trusts the DE with creating a decision making process for reviewing and approving the task force's recommendations.

The ECI Professional Development Steering Committee is re-organizing its structure to allow it to become more focused and effective. The changes include creating subcommittees, each representing a subsystem (“oval”) of the early childhood system. Consequently, next steps regarding the Task Force's work will likely fall under the

purview of two of these subcommittees: Early Learning and Early Intervention/Special Needs.

Penny then outlined the decision making process for approving the recommended core competencies for teaching staff recommended by the PLC Task Force. [See attached.] She informed members that she has spoken with the DE Director Judy Jeffrey and Division Administrators Kevin Fangman and Laura Belle to ensure they are aware of the task force work and its implications for the state's efforts to elevate teacher competency for all children, beginning at birth.

### **Agenda Review – Stacie Goffin, PLC Task Force Facilitator**

Stacie reminded members that their Charge offers the opportunity to help define the future of the ECI professional development system. She encouraged Task Force members to try not to be overly restrained by the constraints of the present. She reviewed the meeting agenda, highlighting the need for:

- Deepening consideration and inclusion of current research;
- Ensuring that emerging competencies, in line with the group's Charge, is aligned with relevant state and federal standards; and
- Completing development of the core competencies for all teaching roles, levels, and child developmental levels for review by their work groups prior to the July 30-31 meeting.

Stacie reminded Task Force members of their timeline: By the conclusion of the July meeting, the teaching staff core competencies will be approved as Draft and forwarded for review by six external reviewers. At the August, members will review and revise the draft core competencies based on the feedback received from the external reviewers. In October, task force members will review the input from state stakeholders and finalize its recommendations for submission to the DE.

### **Foundational Decisions**

Building from its work at the April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, the PLC Task Force approved the following – and additional - foundational decisions:

- Operational definition of “core” in the term “core competency”: Specific to teaching role and essential to children's learning and developmental outcomes as defined by Iowa Early Learning Standards and Iowa Core Curriculum Essential Skills and Concepts
  - This definition applies to the teacher and teacher assistant-teacher aide role regardless of setting

The approved description of “core” was added to the Task Force's definition of core competency approved at the April meeting.

## **Initial Identification of Gaps in Teaching Performance**

Based on their observations and experiences, Task Force members identified the biggest gaps in knowledge, skills, and dispositions in teaching staff performance in Iowa early care and education settings for children ages birth through Kindergarten. This information was used to inform further development of core competencies for teaching staff.

## **Insights from Work Group Experiences**

Members shared insights gleaned from their external work groups (PLC Task Force members and other professionals). In regard to what work group members want teaching staff to know and be able to do, members noted that the performance expectations for teaching staff are high. Also, members may need to give more attention to the competencies needed by teachers to navigate the relationship between responsiveness to families and the demands of program standards. The PLC Task Force's operational distinctions between and among performance levels appear to be easily understood, and the work sequences created at the April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting has been effective.

## **Drafting Core Competencies for Teaching Staff by Level, Role and Age Cohort**

In their internal work groups (Task Force members only) and as a whole, members refined and expanded on the core competencies for teachers and teaching assistants-teacher aides in the sequence agreed upon at the April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting. This task included review of the emerging core competencies against state-relevant program, personnel, and early learning standards to ensure alignment and identification of omissions.

## **Task Force Criteria for Selecting and Approving Teaching Staff Core Competencies**

Task Force members compiled and approved self-assessment criteria for approving their proposed core competencies for teaching staff.

### **ASSESSMENT BY COMPETENCY**

- Does core competency align with the performance level to which it is assigned?
- Does core competency fit teaching role for which it is developed?
- Does core competency reflect child's development level?
- Is the core competency truly *core*?
- Are the competencies observable?
- Are the competencies appropriate to all early care and education settings?

### **ASSESSMENT OF DOCUMENT OVERALL**

- Are the competencies aligned with the State's program, curriculum, and early learning standards? With relevant federal standards, e.g., Head Start Performance Standards? Do they take into account the State's teacher preparation requirements?

- Do the competencies align with national professional standards (NAFCC, Head Start, NAEYC, DEC)?
- Do the competencies incorporate what teaching staff need to know and be able to do to help children succeed in school and be successful in their futures?
- Do redundancies exist that can be eliminated?
- Are related core competencies complementary versus overlapping?
- Do the competencies as a whole reflect the most current research and thinking on children's learning and development? On the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed by teaching staff?
- Do the competencies sufficiently take into account what children will need to know and do to be successful in their futures?
- Do the competencies reflect the task force decision to identify all three performance levels as "professional" levels of performance?
- Can your work be used to advance the State's efforts to create a cohesive early care, health, and education professional development system?

### **External Reviewers**

Six external reviewers will be identified to provide members with feedback on their work. Three reviewers will be internal to the state and three will be external. Members were asked to identify criteria for selecting these external reviewers. The following criteria for selecting reviewers were identified:

- Have not been previously involved in the task force process
- Are from both urban and rural locations across the state
- Have expertise related to children ages birth through kindergarten, in diverse settings, e.g., child care, public schools, and Head Start, and in a range of developmental and content domains

Members then suggested state and national reviewers who might fit these criteria. Penny Milburn will make the final selection and make contact with reviewers prior the July Task Force meeting.

### **Next Steps, Stacie Goffin, PLC Task Force Facilitator**

Task Force work group chairs will be convened by conference call in their capacity as a Steering Committee to assess the status of the task force's progress and develop recommendations on several overarching issues for consideration by the Task Force at its July 30-31.

### **Adjournment**

The PLC Task Force meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.